HEAVEN'S ALARM TO THE WORLD.

OR

A SERMON, wherein is shewed, That Fearful

Sights

And Signs in Heaven, are the *PRESAGES* of great *CALAMITIES* at hand.

Preached at the Lecture of Boston *in* New-England; *January*, 20. 1680.

By Mr. *INCREASE MATHER.*

The Second *IMPRESSION.*

Rev. 8. 10. *And the third Angel sounded, and there fell a great Star from heaven, burning as it were a Lamp,* &c.
Rev. 11. 14. —— *behold, the third Wo cometh quickly.*

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TO THE READER.

COncerning thoſe admirable; and amazing works of God, which are by us called *Comets*, as under a *Phyſical* and *Mathematical* Conſideration, there are many that have publiſhed their Sentiments, and ſome to good purpoſe and edification. The ſcope of the enſuing diſcourſe, is only (that being moſt proper for one under my circumſtances) to make a *Theological* Improvement thereof. There are that do propound this inquiry, *How many Comets hath the world taken notice of ſince the firſt Creation?* Which is indeed a Queſtion that no mortal living is able to give a full and certain anſwer unto. It is true that ſundry learned and worthy Writers (eſpeciall *Lavater* and *Alſted*) have attempted to give us the Hiſtory of *Comets*, nor hath their labour been wholly in vain or unprofitable. In the Authors but now mentioned (though others give us a larger account) We do not read of above eleven *Blazing Stars*, in thoſe Ages (for about four thouſand years) that were before the Incarnation of the Son of God: Doubtleſs there were more; but the Records of thoſe times are very imperfect, ſo that we cannot ſay, when they appeared, or by whom obſerved. The number of *Comets* ſeen theſe laſt 1680. years, is judged to be about 158. Some ſpeak of a farr greater number, but others queſtion whether there have been ſo many, inaſmuch as diverſe appearances of the ſame

Comet have been set down by Historians as if they had been so many distinct *Comets*. Such *Stars* (for so rather than *Meteors* have the Observations of later times evinced them to be) have ever been accounted *Ominous Presages* of great mutations and miseryes coming upon the world. So did the wise men amongst the Gentiles of old (*a*) their Orators, Poets, Philosophers

(a) *Ab ultima antiquitatis memoria notatum est Cometas semper calamitatum prænuncios fuisse.* Cicer. *de nat. Deor. Lib.* 2.

——— *diri toties arsere Cometæ.* Virg.

Et terris nunquam spectaclum impune Cometæ.
Claudian.

———*Quando nocte Cometæ.*
Sanguinei lugubre rubent. ———

ever esteem of them. And the observation hath been sadly verified, by the experience of latter Ages; consonant to the holy Scriptures of Truth, where (both in the Old Testament and in the New) Prodigious Sights and Signs in the heavens are mentioned as the presages of great Calamityes. Some object that after the blazing Star, Anno, 1097. A very fertile prosperous year followed, but they forget that the next year a direful Plague raged in the World. Others object that *Wickliffs* and *Luthers* Reformations, had *Comets* to procede them. But (to say nothing of the Warrs and fatal changes which in those dayes hapned in diverse parts of the World) two or three exceptions do not invalidate the truth of a general Assertion. If such signs are commonly Presages of sore Calamityes, that's enough to awaken men out of their Lethargyes, though now and then, once in an hundred times it should happen to be otherwayes, which yer remains to be demonstrated. As for their notion who think that *Comets* are signs that the

the light of the Goſpel ſhall be further diſperſed in the world, or that they portend mercy to the Church, and Judgement to others only; it is to be wiſhed that there were a ſolid foundation for ſuch a conceipt: But alas! Diviſions amongſt the Lord's profeſſing People themſelves, and great Perſecutions have oftentimes been the fatal conſequents of ſuch portentous ſigns. And if publick calamities come upon the world, it is not to be expected but that the Lord's People, whilſt they are mixed amongſt others (and too much partaking with them in their ſins) living in an evil world, will have their ſhare therein. It hath ever been ſo, and is ever like to be ſo, until *the ſign of the Son of Man appear.*

As for the *Blazing Star*, which hath occaſioned this preſent Diſcourſe, it was a terrible ſight indeed, eſpecially about the middle of *December* laſt, the ſtream of ſuch a ſtupendous magnitude, as that few men now living ever beheld the like. That in the year, 1618. was looked upon as very prodigious *(b)* yet the radiant Locks of it were not at firſt though at laſt extended above 45. degrees in length, whenas this was about 60. degrees. Yet I cannot ſay there never was any ſo diſmal ſince the world began, for I have read of diverſe no leſs *fearfull. Seneca* (*c*) ſpeaketh of a *Comet* whoſe magnitude was equal with that of the Sun: And of another that prodigiouſly diffuſed it ſelf over the *Via lactea*; and of another very formidable, after which *Helice* and *Buris*, Citves in *Achaia* periſhed by a fearful Inundation. That which appeared Anno Chriſti, 1452. (*d*) was above 50. degrees in length. Writers ſpeak of ſome

(b) *Hiſtory of great Brittain*, Pag. 128. Clark's *Example*, *Vol.* 2. p. 256.

(c) *Nat. Queſt.* Lib. 7. C. 15, 16.

(d) *Teſte* Nauclero.

Blazing

Blazing Star that hath been attended with a much longer ſtream; Yea, of one that was 90. and another that was 130. degrees. Nevertheleſs, one ſo fearful to behold as this, hath rarely been known: And without controverſie ſome great thing is portended thereby. I ſee little reaſon to conclude, that it is an *Omen* of happy dayes to the world untill God hath made way for mercy by great Judgements. Eſpecially conſidering, that we are fallen into the dregs of time, wherein the dayes muſt and ſhall be perilous. It was long ſince (*e*) conjectured, that in the Ages more immediatly preceding the day of Judgement, *Comets* and other *fearful Sights* ſhould be more frequent than formerly, as intimations of the great and amazing Revolutions in thoſe Ages to be accompliſhed. It will not be long before the ſecond Wo Trumpet hath done its work, and then the third Wo will come quickly. The Lord grant that we may be accounted worthy to ſtand before the Son of Man at His coming.

(e) *Keckerm. Phyſ. ubi de Cometis.* p. *mihi* 1697.

Magius de exuſtione Mundi. l. 3. *c.* 10.

The learned and judicious *Hoſpinian* (*f*) writes that Anno, 729. There was a *Comet* ſeen firſt in the Eaſt, in the Morning, and after in the Weſt in the Evening (juſt as with our preſent *Blazing Star*) *Quaſi Orienti ſimul & Occidenti magni alicujus mali Præſagi.* We have cauſe to fear that this *Comet* ſo appearing doth preſage and portend great Calamityes both to the Eaſt and the Weſt, *h. e.* to the World in *General.* That ſome notable day of the Lord is at hand, when ſuch Signs appear, we may believe: Hence are they called (*g*) *Prodigia* a *Præoſtendendo*, becauſe they ſhew before hand that *ſomething Remarkable*

(f) *De Origine templorum.* p. 59.

(g) V. *Melchior Fun* Orat Par. 1. p. 425.

able is a coming. Further then this I would not go about to *determine*; only we may modeſtly *conjecture* as to particular events like to happen. I have ever thought it unwarrantable, for men, not acted by an extraordinary Spirit, to make particular and poſitive determinations concerning the Judgements (or the Perſons eminently concerned therein) by ſuch Prodigie menaced. The great *Melanchon* hath been thought (by ſome great (*h*) Authors) to proceed ſomething too far in applications of this nature. *Peucerus* (*Melanchon*'s Son in Law) expreſſeth himſelf more warily, in his *Teratoſcopia*, or Diſcourſe about *Divination from fearful Sights*. Yet he affirms that when ever great changes in the world have been near, prodigious Sights have been the forerunners thereof; and that unuſual Sights are ſeldom or never known to have hapned without great and miſerable changes attending them. Only it is poſſible for particular Perſons and places through faith in Chriſt, and in a way of humble Repentance, to obtain a lengthening out of their tranquility. The Gentiles of old (*i*) when chey beheld *fearfull Sights in Heaven*, would preſently betake themſelves to their Prayers and Piacular Sacrifices (in imitation of whom idolatrous Papiſts have been wont in like caſes to go to their Reliques, Amulets, Proceſſions, &c.) that ſo evils *Ominated* thereby, might (if poſſible) be averted. And ſhall not Profeſſours of the true Religion, be awakened by ſuch awful works of God, to go unto Jeſus Chriſt (our only Sacrifice) and to pray earneſtly that impending wrath may be removed, and the mercy of Heaven obtained? Shall we not be humbled, as for other Sins, ſo for that, of not hearkning to His VVord? The contempt

(h) *Voetius in Diſp. de Sign.*

(i) *Alexand. ab Alex.* l. 5. c. 27. *Cœlius Rodogi.* l. 3. c. 27.

tempt whereof provoketh him to ſpeak by *fearful Sights and Signs from Heaven*, which ſeems to be the (*k*) meaning of that Scripture, *Act.* 2. 19. The Lord is many wayes calling upon men, to repent, and pray, and get into the Ark before the Flood come. Indeed we ſhould not be diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven, nevertheleſs (as that Emperor ſaid) *We ought to fear that God who hath made this blazing ſtar.* Surely, we have cauſe to ſpeak, as ſometimes the Pſalmiſt did, *My fleſh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements.*

(k) *Strigelius & Toſſanus ad Locum.*

Boſton, *N-E.*
Febr. 16.
1680.

(I.

INCREASE MATHER.

HEAVEN'S ALARM TO THE WORLD.

Luk. 21. 11. ——— *Fearful Sights, and great Signs ſhall there be from Heaven.*

THE Lord Jeſus Chriſt, having told his Diſciples that great Calamityes were haſtning upon Jeruſalem, and upon the Jewiſh Nation; they enquire when thoſe things ſhould come to paſs, and what *Signs* ſhould precede and preſage the Judgements

Judgements predicted. This we ſee in the *7th.* Verſe of this Chapter, *They asked Him, ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be: and what* Sign *will there be when theſe things ſhall come to paſs?* In Anſwer unto which Enquiry, the Lord Chriſt doth in this Context mention ſeveral things, ſome of which were to be more remote, and others more immediate *Signs* of that miſerable Deſtruction, which the ſacred and unerring lips of Chriſt had foretold. 1. Falſe Chriſts would ariſe, *V.* 8. *Many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt*, &c. The Jews had rejected the true Meſſiah, therefore God would puniſh them with falſe Chriſts, as an intimation that the dayes of vengeance were coming upon the Nation for that Sin of theirs. The Apoſtle *John* (Chriſt's beloved Diſciple) doth imitate his Maſter in mentioning the ſame thing as a Sign that the Jewiſh World was near unto its end, 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. *There are many Antichriſts* b *h. e.* falſe Chriſts, ſuch as came

b. *See* Mede's *Works*, *P.* 818, 872.

in Chriſt's Name,

Name, *i. e.* that pretended unto his Office, Dignity, and Authority; and thereby, (saith the Apostle,) *we know that it is the last time*; sc. the Jewish State, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, was come unto the last hour: The Period of the Jewish World was at hand. And the Historyes of those times speak of one *Theudas*, and others, that pretended to be Christs, and that the River *Jordan* should give way to them as once it did to *Joshuah*; so that a multitude of silly Jews were seduced, & perswaded to follow them, unto their own destruction. 2. Another Sign mentioned, is that of Warres, and Commotions, *V. 9. When you shall hear of Wars and Commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by & by.* This may be understood of those *Intestine* Warres and *Commotions*, which hapned in the Land of *Judea*. The *Galileans* took up Arms against the *Samaritans*. At *c* one time, in a Mutiny there were twenty Thousand slain. These were *Commotions*, which caused a great

c Joseph. *Antiq. L.* 20. *C.* 4, 5. *De Bello* Jud. *L.* 2. *Cap.* 11.

great noiſe and conſternation amongſt men (eſpecially amongſt thoſe of the Jewiſh Nation) in thoſe dayes. Hence that which is by *Luke* expreſſed by *Wars* and *Commotions*, is by *Mark* called *Troubles*; and by *Matthew*, *Wars and Rumors of Wars*. And theſe things hapned about twenty years before the final deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and fatal overthrow of the *Jewiſh* Nation; therefore was it ſaid, *The end is not by and by*. 3. Another Sign is that mentioned in the 10*th*. *V*. *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt Nation, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom*. * So indeed it came to paſs, when the *Jewish* Nation roſe up againſt the *Romane* Nation; and their Neighbouring Nations, *Syrians*, *Samaritans*, &c. roſe againſt them. In thoſe dayes the Land of *Judea* was divided into ſeveral Provinces, which did bear the names of *Kingdoms*, and the chief Governours of them are according to the *Hebrew* Style, called *Kings*, being the Vice-Roys which the *Romane* Emperours did ſubſtitute to

* Joſeph. *de Bello* Judaico. *Lib*. 2. *C*. 19. 20, 21.

to be over thoſe places.. See 1 *King.* 22. 47. Hence we read of King *Herod*, King *Agrippa*, &c. *d* Now the people of theſe Provinces were ſet one againſt another; therefore it is ſaid, *Kingdom ſhal riſe up againſt Kingdom.* All theſe troubles were forerunners and Intimations of the fatal Calamity a coming, and did help to make way thereunto. 4. There were to be *great Earth-Quakes in divers Places.* In the beginning of this Verſe. Such things are uſually ſigns of Divine Anger, and ſo portentous of great Changes and Calamityes: the Intimations of State-Quakes, yea of Nation-Quakes. Hiſtorians ſpeak of very tremendoſe Earthquakes which hapned in diverſe places *f* whereby

d Grotius, & Lucas Brugenſis *in* Matth. 24. 7.

f *Sex circiter annos, ante Urbis excidium, tres Aſiæ clariſſimas urbes, Terræ-motu everſas eſſe, teſtatur* Oroſius. *L.* 7. Tacitus *ſcribit, ſub* Tiberio Nerone, *duodecim civitates in* Aſia *Terræ-motu collapſas eſſe: Ac denuo in quinto ejus regni anno, tredecim urbes Terræ-motu cecidiſſe.*

Vide Bertram. *in* Matth. 24. 7.

ſeveral

ſeveral famous Cities periſhed, not long before *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed. 5. *Famines.* Probably that Prediction doth reſpect the ſame Famine which *Agabus* propheſied of, *Act.* 11. 28. Under which the Land of *Judea* ſuffered deeply. Whence it was that the Apoſtle *Paul* was very ſollicitous to obtain ſome Relief for the Chriſtian *Jews* then at *Jeruſalem.* 6. *Peſtilences.* Theſe two Judgements, (*Limoi kai Loimoi*, as in the *Greek* it is elegantly expreſſed) of *Famine, and Peſtilence,* do often go together, the latter following at the heels of the former, and being occaſioned thereby. 7. *Fearful Sights and great Signs in Heaven:* which are the words now before us to conſider of. Fearful Sights] *Gr. Phobetra* [*Terrieulamenta:*] Such Sights as ſtrike a terror into the hearts of men that are the Spectators of them. *Signs from Heaven*] *viz.* Prodigious Signs. Theſe things are mentioned as the more immediate Preſages of thoſe Miſeryes that were coming upon *Jeruſalem,* with the whole *Jewiſh* Nation.

Doct.

Doct. *That Prodigious awful Sights and Signs in Heaven, are oftentimes, the Presages of great Calamity coming upon the World.*

For the further clearing of this Doctrine, three things may be enquired into. 1. What Sights and Signs are the Presages of Calamity? 2. How it doth appear that they are so? 3. What Calamityes such Signs do commonly presage?

Q. 1. *What Sights and Signs in Heaven are Presages of Calamity?*

Ans. 1. There are Signs in the *starry Heaven.* The great God, when he made the World, placed the Stars in Heaven, to be for Signs as to Events that in the ordinary Course of Nature should come to pass. *Gen.* 1. 14. *God said, Let there be lights in the Firmament of heaven, and let them be for Signs.* They are for Signs of Heat and Cold, wet and dry Seasons, and the like. Hence the Lord spake to *Job*, as in Ch. 38. 31. *Canst thou bind the sweet Influences of* Pleiades, *or loose the bands of* Orion? The *Pleiades* are the same with those

those which men call the *Seven Starres*. When the Sun is in that Constellation with the *Pleiades*, it hath great power and Influence upon the Earth. It is Spring-time then. As for *Orion* f it is a Winter-Constellation, causing Cold, whereby the pores of the earth are bound. It binds the Earth from bearing Fruit, and as it were binds the hands of Men from labour in their particular Callings. When that Constellation appears in the Evening (as it doth in the ninth Moneth) 'tis a sign that the Earth shall be bound, as hath bin expressed. Yea, and it is a sign that Storms and tempestuous seasons are to be expected. Therefore was it by the Poet called *Nimbosus Orion*. And hence the Stars are called by the name of the *Signs of heaven*, Jer. 10. 2. *Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the Signs of heaven*. Which words may well be understood concerning the Stars and Constellations in the heavens. g For the Hea-

f *See Mr.* Caryl *on* Job, 38. 31.

g *Ita locum interpretantur Rab.* Solomon Jarchi, *& ex illo* Lyranus. Voetius *Disp. select. Par.* 2. *P.* 923.

then

then, the *Chaldeans* especially (among whom the *Jews* were then going to dwell) superstitiously imagin'd that the Stars were Rulers of the World, and did therefore stand in fear of them, and worship them; which heathenish Idolatry the Lord doth caution and charge his People against. The Stars of Heaven are for natural Signs. Their Motions and Appearances are significations that such and such things, will according to that Course of Nature which God hath setled, come to pass in the World. There are also *extraordinary Stars*, sometimes appearing in the Heavens. God in his Providence doth so order, as that sometimes, *Blazing Stars* are seen in heaven. Such *Stars* are called *Comets*, from the stream like long Hair, which useth to attend them. Such a Star is *Prodigious*, and a *Fearful Sight*. And of this may the words of the Text be understood. The *Jewish* [g] Historian reports, that not long before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, there was a *Blazing Starre* in

[g] Warres of Jews, *l* 7. *c* 12

form of a Sword, which seemed to impend over the City, for a Year together: This now was a *fearful Sight*, and a *great Sign from Heaven*.

2 There are fearful Sights and Signs appearing in the *Air*, sometimes in the lower heaven, which we move & breathe in. Prodigious Meteors are sometimes seen there. And strange Appearances, which are either seen, or heard speaking. Of these fearful sights and signs, is the Text likewise to be interpreted. *Josephus* relates, that before the *Romane* Army destroyed *Jerusalem*, there were seen in the Air, Iron Chariots, and Souldiers in battel aray; and in the night time, a great Light appeared in the Temple, for half an hour together, with as much brightness as if it had been noon day; and a Voice was heard saying, *Let us be gone from hence*.

Qu. 2. *How doth it appear that such Fearful Sights are Presages of Calamityes coming upon the World?*

Ans. 1. The Scripture is clear for this. The Text before us doth expressly declare no

no lefs. And the Prophet *Joel* foretelling the ſame Calamityes which this Text hath reference unto, ſaith alſo, that prodigious Signs in heaven ſhould preſage and portend them. *Joel*, 2. 30, 31. *I will ſhew Wonders in the heaven.* Truly, Blazing Stars are Wonders in the heaven. *And in the Earth, blood, and fire and pillars of ſmoke before the great and the terrible Day of the Lord come.* When *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed, and the *Jewiſh* ſtate diſſolved, that was a great and notable Day of the Lord, a Type of the great Day of Judgement. *Wonders*, even prodigious and amazing Signs ſhould precede it. A very learned *i* and judicious Interpreter conceiveth that the *Hebrews* of old did uſe to call Comets, or Blazing Stars by that name of *A Pillar of Smoke*, becauſe ſometimes they appear like Pillars of ſmoke, and that therefore when it is ſaid, there ſhall be Pillars of ſmoke before the terrible Day of the Lord, the true meaning and intendment of thoſe Expreſſions is, that

(i) Mede *Diſcourſe.* 6. P. 37

that Comets ſhould precede and preſage the miſeryes coming upon the *Jewiſh* Nation. Yea, the Scripture informs us, that *Fearful Sights and Signs in heaven*, ſhall precede the Great and General Day of Judgement, as Preſages thereof. *Luk.* 21. 25. *There ſhall be Signs in the ſtarres:* meaning that ſuch things ſhould be obſerved among the Stars in heaven, as would be a Sign that Chriſt's coming to Judge the World, did approach. Wherefore in Verſe 28. it is ſaid, *When theſe things come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your Redemption draweth nigh.* The Day of *Judgement*, is a Day of *Redemption*, and is ſo called in other Scriptures, *Epheſ.* 4. 30. Then ſhall the Bodies of the Saints be redeemed from the power of the Grave; and both Bodies and Souls, redeemed from all Evils of ſin and of ſuffering. *Rom.* 8. 23. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. At the Reſurrection, in the laſt Day, will the great Redemption be to the Saints of God, and the greateſt Miſeryes to the Wicked that ever were thought of. And

ſigns

Signs in heaven ſhall precede them. And hence it is, that *Fearful Sights* are called *Signs* in the Scripture; it is partly on this account, in that they are *Signs* that the Lord is coming forth out of his holy habitation, to puniſh the World for their Iniquityes.

2. The Experience of many Ages doth bear witneſs to the truth of this Doctrine. If the Scripture were ſilent about this matter, the Experience both of former and later Ages doth ſufficiently and ſadly confirm the Truth in hand. Hence an *k* heathen Writer could ſay, *If God be about to punish a City or a Nation, He is wont first to give warning of it by Prodigyes*, by Signs from heaven. And commonly it is ſo, that when ſtupendous Signs go before, ſtupendous Judgements follow after. Some *l* have written large Volumes con-

k Cum Deus puniturus ſit gentem vel urbem, Prodigijs id prius ſolet ſignificare, Herod. *l.* 6. *Lege* Melchioris Junij *Orat. Par.* 1. *p.* 425. (*l*) Conradus Lycoſthenes *Librum edidit in quo omnia collegit Prodigia, quæ ab exordio mundi oſtenſa ſunt.* Zanch. *de natura Dei*, *p.* 414.

cerning the Fearful Sights, which have at ſeveral times and places been obſerved in the World; and the Judgements and Miſeryes which have followed.

3. Many times ſuch fearful Sights are tokens of God's Anger; which is another Reaſon why they are called *Signs*, as being Signs of the Anger of God: Signs that flaming Vengeance is kindled, and burning in Heaven againſt a ſinful World. Now when God is angry, then Publick Judgements come, as Teſtimonyes of Divine Diſpleaſure. *Perſonal* Afflictions are not alwayes Evidences of God's Anger, as we ſee in *Job*: but *Publick* Judgements are ever wont to be ſo. 'Tis thought that the ninetieth Pſalm was penned by *Moſes* on occaſion of a publick Judgement, the Plague which broke in upon the Children of *Iſrael*, and ſwept away many Thouſands of them: And ſaith he, *We are conſumed by thy Anger, & by thy Wrath are we troubled*, V. 7. So that if Publick Judgements come, God is angry, and his Wrath kindled: He doth by

by them testify, and power down his righteous Displeasure from Heaven. Inasmuch then as fearful Sights are Tokens of God's Anger, they are Presages of great and publick Calamities. As the *Rainbow* (though a natural Sign) is a token of Divine *Favour*; so are prodigious Sights Tokens of Divine *Anger*.

4. These fearful Sights are many times Presages of those things which make way for great Changes and Calamityes to come upon the World. They are oftentimes (Blazing Stars [m] in a more special manner are so) the Presages of the death of great; yea, and of worthy Men. Is not the fatal downfal of *Augustulus* (the last *Roman* Emperour) in the Scripture emblematically set forth, by that of a *Blazing-Star* [n] falling to the ground?

m Damascen. *l.* 2. *c.* 6. Isidor. *l.* 3. *Etymol.*

——— *crinemq; timendi*
Syderis, & terris mutantem regna Cometam. Lucan.

Anno 1471. *ardet Cometa: Hoc anno multi Principes moriuntur. Anno* 1477. *multi Principes obierunt.* Alsted.

n Mede *in* Apoc. 8. 10.

Rev. 8. 10. *There fell a great ſtar from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.* It is conceived, that the ruine of *Auguſtulus*, dethroned by *Odoacer* the *Herulian*, was ſignified by thoſe words, and that he is reſembled to that ſort of *Comets*, which is called *Lampadias*. And when there is a Star burning and blazing in heaven, commonly it proves fatal to ſome *Auguſtalus*; whence great Changes & miſeryes enſue. Yea, the Death of *worthy* (as well as *great*) Perſonages, is ſometimes portended by ſuch Signs. A little before great *Conſtantine*'s death, a blazing Star appeared, and infinite miſeryes followed. In the Year ° 1556. a Comet (then vulgarly called a *fiery Beeſom*) was ſeen; and ſoon after, many learned, uſeful, worthy Men dyed; whoſe death was an unſpeakable loſs and miſery to the places where they had lived.

° Alſted. *Chronol.* C. 49. *ubi de Cometis.* *See* Spotwood's *Hiſt.* Scotl. p. 94.

Queſt. 3. *What Calamityes do ſuch fearful Sights and Signs in heaven preſage?*

Anſ. We muſt not be particular and poſitive

positive in Interpretations of things of this nature. When a fearful Sight appears in heaven, which the whole World cannot but take notice of, now to make a particular and absolute determination *p*, that such a Place, or such a Person, such a Judgement, is certainly intended thereby, is too much boldness. In general, we may safely say, that there is just cause to expect that great Calamityes are at hand: but what Persons or Places shall more eminently fall under those Judgements, is not for us to determine; but we must leave that with God, who best knows what himself intends to do.

p V. Voet. *in Disp. de Signis. P.* 919, 930.

This being premised, we proceed in Answering the Enquiry before us.

1. Sometimes such Signs are Presages of great Persecutions coming upon the Church of God. The Lord in mercy to his People, giveth them such Warnings, that so they may prepare for what's a coming, or make haste to enter into the Chambers of safety, as it were for a little moment,

moment, till the Indignation be overpaſt. *Nero's* bloudy Perſecution had a *Blazing Star* to precede it. The ſame is true concerning the *Arian* Hereſy and perſecution, that flood ſpoken of in the *Revelation*, which the Dragon caſt out of his mouth, and whereby the Woman, the Church, fled into the Wilderneſs, was in eminent danger of being ſwallowed up and devoured. *Rev.* 12. 15.

2. Sometimes ſuch Signs in heaven are Preſages of miſerable Dearths and Scarcity. That Blazing Star impending over *Jeruſalem*, which the Text hath reference unto, was attended with a terrible Famine, whereby multitudes periſhed *q*. And therefore ſuch Signs are frequently portentous of thoſe Judgements, which

q *In the Years after Chriſt*, 876. 948. 964. *there were Blazing Stars ſeen, preſaging Famines & other Judgements.* In Annis 674, 675, 676. *Comets appeared, and ſore Droughts followed: In ſome Countryes it rained not for* 3 *Years together. The like Miſeryes followed the Comet* Anno 1477. In Annis 594. 1527. 1542. *Comets were ſeen, and Armies of Locuſts followed, devouring the Fruits of the Earth.*

cauſe

cause Want and scarcity; *e. gr.* of sore Droughts and Blastings, and the multiplication of noxious Creatures that destroy the Fruits of the Earth. All which particulars I could confirm unto you by approved History, which declareth how they have all been presaged by *Blazing Stars* in heaven.

3. Lamentable Deaths and Destructions amongst Men, have been oftentimes presaged by such Sights in heaven. Sudden and amazing Ruines, by r *Earthquakes*, by *Inundations*, by *Fire*, and the like awful Visitations, have been thereby portended. Especially destructions by mortal and contagious Diseases. That strange Disease, known by the name of

r *In the Years* 66, 78. 79, and 668. *Comets appeared, after which terrible Earthquakes hapned in many Places.* Annis 377, 912, 1530. *there were blazing Stars appearing; and Inundations followed in diverse places. Quickly after the Comet* Anno 882. *the famous City of* Triers *was burnt to the ground.* Alsted. *ubi supra. Memorabile fuit Portentum Terræ-motus* Anno 1618. *quando ruina montis, qua totum Oppidum plurium, & Vicus* Schilanus *cum* 900 *Hominibus oppressa.*

Sudor

Sudor Anglicanus, which in a peculiar manner purſued thoſe of the *Engliſh* Nation, even when in ſtrange Lands; whence they were dreaded in all places where they came, there was a *Blazing Star* that did precede it. Eſpecially that which is, of all Diſeaſes miſerable Mortals are ſubject unto, the moſt terrible, I mean the *Plague* of *Peſtilence*, s it is frequently thus preſaged. Such Sights are *Heaven's Alarm* to a ſinful World, to give notice that God hath bent his Bow, and made his Arrows ready, and that if Sinners turn not, the Arrows of Peſtilence and Death ſhall fall down upon them ſpeedily. This might be confirmed by a multitude of Inſtances; but it needs not. Our own Experience is enough. We cannot but remember the *Blazing Star* that was ſeen but 16

s *Anno* 1457. *Cometa quem* nigrum *appellabant, apparuit, ſecuta eſt Peſtis diuturnior.* *Anno* 1472. *Duo Cometæ: Peſtis adeo ſævijt, ut Cognati proximi deſererent ſuos. Idem eodem Libro.* *Anno* 1006. *Cometa, quem Peſtis excepit, ut vivi cum mortuis ſepelirentur: multa Oppida plane exhauſit.*

Years

Years agoe, and a terrible *Plague* followed; so that in our own Nation, near upon an *hundred thousand* were swept away in one City, and in one Year. And it is reported, that immediately after that great *Blazing Starre*, which appeared above threescore years ago, God sent the *Plague* † amongst the Natives in this Land, which swept them away in such multitudes, as that the living were not enough to bury the dead. So did the Lord cast out the Heathen before this his People, that the way might thereby be prepared unto our more peaceable settlement here. The Lord in mercy grant, that we may never, by becoming like unto the Heathen in Profaneness and Irreligion, provoke Him to do unto us, as He hath done unto them.

† *See Mr.* Gorge's *Description of* New-Engl. *Pag.* 27.

4. Such fearful Sights and Signs in heaven, are usual Presages of War among the Nations, and so of those Devastations and Desolations which the Sword leaveth behind it. Prodigyes on the *Earth* doe sometimes

ſometimes betoken War and Bloodſhed, 2 *King.* 3. 22. And Signs in *Heaven* do no leſs. Thus in my Text, the *Romane* Sword, which made the *Jewiſh* Nation deſolate (according to *Daniel*'s Propheſy Ch. 9. 27.) was portended by a fearful *Blazing Star* in heaven. *u*

And when *Alaricus* the *Goth* made ſuch a terrible Irruption upon the *Romane* Empire, like a ſtorm of Hail, and Fire, and Blood, *Rev.* 8. 7. *Blazing Stars* in heaven preceded thoſe Calamityes. When *Attila*, who they ſay, called himſelf *Flagellum Dei*, God's Whip, to ſcourge the World for their Wickedneſs, when he was armed to be the Executioner of divine Vengeance upon the Earth, deſtroying Cityes, and laying Nations waſte before him, *Blazing Stars* were ſeen preceding and portending thoſe miſerable Times. In like manner, when the *Saracens* (the firſt Wo-Trumpet) and the *Turks* (the

u —— *Belli mala ſigna Cometæ.* Tibul.
Stella relucebit Gladij mortalibus index. Sibyl. *Or. l.* 3.

ſecond

ſecond VVo-Trumper, prophetied of in the *Revelation*) were let looſe upon the Apoſtate Chriſtian VVorld, *Blazing Starres*, and *Fearful Sights in heaven* did precede thoſe woful Dayes. And are there not ſome alive, and here before the Lord this day, that can remember the *blazing Star* which appeared in the *9th.* and in the 10*th* Moneths, in the Year 1618. and the next Year began that unhappy VVar in *Germany*, which proved ſo fatal to the *Proteſtant* Intereſt there.

Thus have we ſeen what Judgements and Calamityes, *Fearful Sights in heaven* are commonly the Preſages of. As for that *SIGN* in heaven, now appearing, (which hath occaſioned me to ſpeak this Word at this time) what Calamityes may be portended thereby, which of the Judgements mentioned, or whether all of them be not thereby preſaged, I ſhall not ſay; but leave it unto God and Time to diſcover. Only in general, we have cauſe to fear, that ſweeping Judgements are thereby ſignified; that the Lord is coming

coming down from Heaven with a long Beesom of Destruction, which shall sweep away a world of Sinners before it.

I conclude with a word of *Application*: Nor would I speak any thing, but the words of Truth and soberness, as becometh a Messenger of Christ to doe, when speaking in His Name.

USE. *Let us hence be Exhorted to approve our selves as those that are under the solemn, awful Warnings of God, ought to do.* I need not say (for every one knows it) that there is a Fearful Sight and Sign appearing in the heavens: Such a formidable *Blazing-star*, as that the like hath seldom been observed. It concerns us then, to hearken to the voice of the Lord therein; who by such tremendous Sights is speaking awfully to the children of Men. Hear then *Heaven's Alarm* this day. You will say, But what should we now do? *What doth the Lord expect from us, when there are such dreadful Presages of Evils coming upon the World?*

Answ.

Answ. 1. It now concerns us to be *awakened out of all Security.* That's one of God's ends (his declared end) in causing such *Fearful Sights* to be taken notice of, that so he might awaken a secure sleeping World. And indeed the Lord manifests his Goodness and Compassion towards sinful Creatures therein. It was a pious Speech of that w Emperour, who beeing somewhat terrified at the sight of a *Blazing-starre,* said to those about him, *Let us admire the Clemency of that God, who before He smites us, causeth such Signs in heaven, that so He might awaken us out of our Security.* O let us beware of crying Peace, Peace, when the Day of Destruction is at hand. O take heed of sleeping, and dreaming of nothing but worldly Prosperity at such a Time as this. When the Lord Jesus Christ had told his Disciples, that calamitous Times were a coming, and mentioned

w *Ejus Clementiam laudare tenemur, qui nostram inertiam, talibus monere dignatur indicijs.* Carolus Magnus; *vel ut alij volunt,* Ludovicus I. Caroli Magni *filius.*

oned the Signs and Preſages thereof, He bids them *Watch therefore*, Luk. 21. 36. Let us not then pleaſe our ſelves, with imagining that ſuch Fearful Sights are Signs of *Mercy* only, and not of *Judgement*. The contrary unto which Opinion, hath been confirmed by more than two hundred Inſtances *x*. Men are exceeding apt to interpret ſuch things in a way of favour to themſelves, when nothing leſs is intended thereby. So when theſe *Fearful Sights and Signs in heaven*, which my Text ſpeaketh of, were ſeen at *Jeruſalem*, the *Jews* did interpret them as *good Omens* to themſelves; and as ominous of Deſtruction to their Enemies. The Prodigies in *Germany* * were looked upon by the *Proteſtants* as Signs of Deliverance unto them, and of Deſtruction to their Enemies. But alaſs! the

x Conſulatur Heidfeld. Sphynx *Philoſoph.* p. 1087. *Univerſali Experientia, & hominum conſenſu, præjudicatum eſt, Cometas magnas mutationes portendere.* Voet. *Diſp. de ſignis* p. 929.

* *Vid.* Clark's *Martyrology* p. 311. &c.

the Event was quite otherwise. And let us not make our selves secure, by saying or thinking, that the Lord by such *fearful Sights* speaks to *others onely*, and not unto *us*. As *Vespasian* the Emperour, when z there was a long *hairy Comet* seen, he did but deride at it, and make a Joke of it, saying, That it concerned the *Parthians* that wore long hair, and not him, who was bald: but within a Year, *Vespasian* himself (and not the *Parthian*) dyed. Such fearful Sights are usually Signs, that those Judgements, which are (as *Tertullian* speaks) *Tonsuræ humani generis*, God's sharp Razors on Mankind, whereby He doth poll, his Sythe, whereby He doth shear down multitudes of sinful Creatures, doe draw near: In which respect, there is no doubt to be made of it, but that God by this *Blazing-star*, is speaking to other Places, and not to *New England* onely. And it may be, He is declaring to that generation of hairy Scalps, who go on still in their Trespasses, that the day of their

z *Testante* Suetonio.

mity is at hand, and that the things which ſhal come upon them make haſte. A *ſtrange Sight* doth betoken *ſtrange Puniſhment* coming upon thoſe that have been prodi gious workers of Iniquity. Yet let not us promiſe to our ſelves nothing but Proſperity in the doleful & the bitter Day, when there ſhall be Lamentation generally. I am perſwaded, that the floods of great water are coming. I am perſwaded that God is about to open the windows of heaven, and to pour down the Cataracts of his Wrath, ere this Generation (wherein *Atheiſm* and *Profaneneſs* are come to ſuch a prodigious height) I ſay, ere this Generation is paſſed away. But what reaſon have we to think that no drops of the fatal Storm ſhall come near to us? If we ſo conclude, we may provoke the Lord to ſay, *The Sinners of my People ſhall dye by the Sword, who ſay, The Evil ſhall not overtake us nor prevent us.* To be awakened out of Security, and tremblingly to wait for the good Pleaſure of God, whatever it may be, is the moſt likely way

way to find Reſt in the day of Trouble. So did the Prophet find it, *Hab.* 3. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, I trembled in my ſelf, that I might reſt in the Day of Trouble.* When the thundring voice of Judgement was heard, his heart trembled at it, ſo did he find Reſt in the Day of Trouble.

2. *This ſhould put us upon preparing for another Day of Trouble.* And this ſhould we do the rather, ſince the Changes portended by this *Comet*, are like to come *ſpeedily* as well as *certainly*. *Joſeph* ſaid to *Pharaoh*, *For that the Dream is doubled, it is becauſe the thing is eſtabliſhed by God, & God will ſhortly bring it to paſs.* Gen. 41. 32. Doth not the *doubled Appearance* of this Fearful Sight in the heavens ſpeak as much? Let us then prepare for Trouble. We ſhould not onely expect it; but ſo expect it, as to prepare for it. Certainly we have reaſon ſo to do. If there had been no *Blazing-ſtar*, yet upon other accounts, we have cauſe to expect and

prepare for *another Day of Trouble*, which ſeems to be haſtning upon thee O *NEW-ENGLAND*, and upon thee, O *BOSTON*! The *Sins* which are amongſt us, are ſurer and blacker Signs of Judgement, than any *Signs in heaven*, that we may think of. I ſay the Sins, the *Pride*, the *Profaneneſs*, the *Worldlineſs*, the general *Security* and *Iniquity* that prevaileth amongſt us. Eſpecially conſidering how little good all former Judgements and Diſpenſations have done upon us. What *Fiery Deſolations* hath the Lord made amongſt us? The Lord hath been roaring out of *Sion*. Such roaring Judgements have been amongſt us, as that the Report of them hath been heard afar off. *Sword*, *Death*, and *Fire*. But (alaſs! O Lord God) may it not be ſaid concerning the generality of men, They return not to Him that hath been ſmiting of them? They are the ſame ſince the *War*, ſince the *Small-Pox*, ſince the *Fires*, that they were before. Ah! what will come next? We have cauſe to expect, and it will be

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our vviſdom to prepare for *another Day of Trouble* ſeven times greater than the former. It grieveth me to ſpeak thus, but I cannot forbear. I feel that the Word of the Lord is like a fire in a mans bones, and it will break out. The Lord God hath ſpoken, who can but propheſy? And now know for certain, that if deſtroying Judgements and Death overtake any in their Sins, and ſweep them avvay to Hell, their blood ſhall be upon their own heads. For the Lord hath fired his Beacon in the heavens, among the Stars of God there; the *Fearful Sight* is not yet out of ſight. The *Warning-piece* in heaven is going off, now then if the Lord diſcharge his *Murdering-pieces* from on high, and men be found in their Sins, unfit for Death, their blood ſhall be upon them. They had Warning given them that the Sword was a coming: Lo, the Lord himſelf gave them the warning; but they would not take vvarning, their blood ſhall be upon them. Moreover, if Troubles ſhould not come, yet it vvill be vviſdom to pre-

pare for them. If the Lord, after Hee hath ſent his Angel to ſtand with a drawn Sword over *Jeruſalem*, ſhould be entreated to ſpare us, yet it will never do us hurt to prepare for the moſt deadly Arrows of Affliction that may light upon us, whilſt in this Vale of Tears.

3. *We ſhould do what in us lyes to divert thoſe Judgements, which ſeem to be impending, and blazing over our heads.* This word of Comfort, I may ſafely ſpeak, *The Lord's Threatenings are not abſolute; but conditional.* So far as we in theſe ends of the Earth, theſe goings down of the Sun, are ſpoken unto, by this *Sign in the heavens*, it is poſſible we may eſcape the Evils threatened thereby, if we duely hearken to the Voice of God therein. *Jer.* 18. 7, 8. *At what time I ſpeak concerning a Nation & concerning a Kingdome, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it: if that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to doe unto them.* So that when deſolating Judgements are threatned,

threatned, either by the Word, or by the awful Works of God, thoſe denunciations of Wrath are not *abſolute*, but *conditional*. If Repentance intervene, the Evils which otherwiſe muſt be looked for, may be diverted. See therefore *Jer.* 36 3, 7. *It may be the houſe of* Judah *will hear all the Evil which I purpoſe to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way.* Ay, a general Repentance is that which will do, if every man turn from his evil way, *that I may forgive their Iniquity and their ſin. It may be they will preſent their Supplication before the Lord*, &c. This is that which the Lord would have; therefore He ſaith, I'le ſtir up the ſpirit of my Miniſters and Ambaſſadors, that they ſhall declare and denounce my Judgements againſt a ſinful Generation. *It may be they will hear.* And I'le ſpeak by awful Signs from heaven, that may be as Heraulds to proclaim *Wrath and Wo* to the World, *It may be they will hear*, and then ſhall their ſins be forgiven. You will ſay, *But what ſhall we do, that ſo the Judge-*

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ments which are blazing over us, may be diverted from us? *Answ.* Pray, and cry mightily to Heaven. For this let every one that is godly pray unto the Lord in a time wherein He may be found, and before the Floods of great waters come nigh unto us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having warned his Disciples of approaching Calamityes, He concludeth vvith an Exhortation unto Prayer, *Luk*, 21 36. *Pray alwayes, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass.* Prayer may do much toward the averting of wrathful Judgements and Desolations. When the Lord threatned to bring Famin and Destruction upon his People, *Amos* fell to praying; and God said, *This shall not be*, this Judgement and threatned desolation shall not be. *Amos* 7. 3, 6. O then, let us deprecate impending Judgements. Do vve see the Sword *blazing* over us? Let it put us upon crying to God, that that Judgement may be diverted, and not return upon us again so speedily. Do vve see the Arrows of Pesti

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lence and Death *blazing* over us? Oh! Pray that the deſtroying Angel may not be ſent to vvalk in darkneſs, and to vvaſte at noon day. Doth God threaten our very Heavens? O pray unto Him, that He vvould not take away *Stars* and ſend *Comets* to ſucceed them. Pray that the Lord Jeſus, vvho holds the Stars in His right Hand, may continue thoſe in the Firmament of his Churches (the Heaven vvhich his own Hand hath planted) who are indeed *Stars*, vvilling to impart the Light vvhich they have received from Chriſt, unto his People: and that *wandring Stars*, *blazing Stars*, *ſeducing Spirits* may never come in their room. I am not vvithout fear, that this vvill at laſt be the Judgement of God upon *New England* and upon theſe Churches. Pray that it may never be. And our *Supplications* ſhould be attended vvith deep *Humiliation*, Zeph. 2. 2, 3. *Gather your ſelves together*, h. e. Come before the Lord in a vvay of publick, ſolemn Humiliation, *before the decree*, i. e. the Judgement written

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and threatned, *bring forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you: seek the Lord — It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.* Thus then should we do in this day, when there are such dark & angry Clouds hanging over our heads; and we know not how soon they may break upon us. And truly, if our *Lectures*, were, some of them, turned into dayes of *Prayer*, at such a time as this, it is no more than what there is cause for. And there is one thing more, that should in special be remembred by us; a thing that hath been much talk'd of; but little hath been done in it, that is, *Reformation*! *Reformation*! When the Prophet *Jonah* was sent of God to preach and say, *Yet forty dayes, and* Nineveh *shall be destroyed:* that was a more awful Sign of Desolation, than if they had seen a *Blazing-star* hanging over the City, menacing the Ruine thereof: Yet when they repented, and *reformed* (though it was but an external Reformation) the Lord spared them

forty

forty years longer. Ah! *New-England*, wilt thou not do more than *Nineveh*? ſhall there not be ſo much as an *external Reformation* of thoſe things that provoke the glorious Eyes of Heaven? Will not the haughty Daughters of Sion, reform their Pride in Apparel? Will they have *the Attire of an Harlot*? Will they lay out their Hair, and wear their falſe Locks, their Borders, and Towers like *Comets*, about their heads? Will they do ſo, untill God ſend his Arrows from Heaven, to ſmite them down into the Grave, where the dayes of Darkneſs ſhall be many? And ſhall there be ſtill ſuch a multitude of *Licenſed Drinking-Houſes* (and Town-dwellers frequenting them) to the Shame of *Boſton*, and to the Infamy of *New-England*; notwithſtanding the Teſtimony which God, and his Servants have given againſt it? How then ſhall we think to eſcape in the Day of the Lord's Anger; if a *Reformation*, ſo much as in theſe Externals, which it is ſo eaſy to reform, will not be obtained? O Return, Return unto

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the Lord. And in that way let us betake our ſelves unto the ſhading Wings of the Lord Jeſus! Do we not hear Him ſpeaking to us, as ſometimes unto *Jeruſalem*, Mat. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as an Hen her Chickens under her wings.* Saith the Lord, The *Roman* Eagles, thoſe birds of prey, are haſtening upon you: But if you would have come under My Wings, you ſhould have been ſafe enough. Even ſo, doth not the Lord ſay, O *New England*! *New England*! doſt thou not know that the birds of prey are deſigning to devour thee? But my Wings are broad enough to ſecure and ſhelter thee, when the black and ſtormy tempeſt ſhall break upon the World. If vve be found a praying, an humble, a reforming People, vvee need not doubt but that *Under the ſhadow of His Wings, we ſhall make our Refuge, untill the Calamity be*

The

THE LATTER SIGN

Diſcourſed of,

IN A

SERMON

Preached at the Lecture of Boſton *in* New-England

Auguſt, 31. 1682.

Wherein is ſhewed, that the Voice of God in Signal Providences, eſpecially when repeated and Iterated, ought to be Hearkned unto.

By *INCREASE MATHER.*

Job, 36. 24, 25. *Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may ſee it, man may behold it afar off.*

Pſal. 28. 5. *Becauſe they regard not the Works of the LORD, nor the Operation of his hands, He ſhall de[illegible] them, and not build them up.*

THE VOICE of GOD IN SIGNAL *PROVIDENCES* Ought to be hearkned unto.

EXOD. 4. 8. *And it shal come to pass, that if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the Voice of the* first *Sign, then they will believe the Voice of the* Latter *Sign.*

IN the preceeding Chapter, we have an Account of *Moses* his being sent to the children of *Israel*, in order to their Deliverance out of Egypt: As also of his sense of the Difficulty of that Undertaking; Whence he did entreat the Lord, that

ſome other Perſon might rather be imployed therein. A man may poſſibly be called of God unto ſpecial Service amongſt his People, and yet find a preſent averſeneſs and unwillingneſs in his own ſpirit, thereunto. *Moſes* was at firſt very unwilling to ingage in that difficult work, which the Lord put him upon; and therefore he made diverſe Objections, which, untill God himſelf anſwered them, he could not be perſwaded to comply therewith. His firſt Objection was from the conſideration of his own perſonal Unfitneſs for ſuch a Service. That Excuſe is obviated and removed in the former Chapter. *Moſes* his ſecond Objection was, that the children of *Iſrael* would not believe that God had ſent him to them upon ſuch an Errand. In the firſt Verſe of this Chapter. *They will not believe me: nor hearken to my Voice: for they will ſay, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* The Lord was graciouſly pleaſed to condeſcend to anſwer this Objection alſo; and that in a miraculous way. And therein

we have 1. The Miracles that were done. Whileſt *Moſes* was yet in the Deſert, vvhere God appeared to him, there vvere two Miracles vvrought before his Eyes, to confirm & encourage him in his Calling. At this Time *Moſes* was keeping the flock of *Jethro* his Father in Law: And as Shepherds vvere vvont to carry a Rod or Paſtoral Staff in their hands, vvhereby they did direct and govern their Sheep (in alluſion unto vvhich Cuſtome, *David* in one of the *Pſalms*, having ſaid, The Lord is my Shepherd, adds, *Let his Rod and his Staff comfort me*) thus *Moſes* had his *Shepherd's Rod* in his hand, vvhich at the Word of the Lord, hee caſt on the ground; and it became a Serpent: and vvhen the Lord ſaid unto him, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail, he did ſo and it became a Rod again. V. 2, 3, 4. In thoſe Miracles, vvhich the Scripture ſpeaks of, there vvas many times an *Analogy* to be obſerved, between the Miracle, and the thing adumbrated thereby. And ſo there vvas in this Miracle. If we look

upon the paſt, preſent, and future ſtate of the children of *Iſrael*, it vvas not unfitly repreſented by this *Sign*. For the children of *Iſrael* *b* in the dayes of *Joſeph*, vvere like unto a Rod, in reſpect of Liberty and Power: But after his Death, they vvere caſt to the ground, and became as vile and odious as Serpents, to the *Ægyptians*. Thus the Rod vvas turned into a Serpent. Moreover, the children of *Iſrael*, vvere by the hand of *Moſes* brought out of a vile and abject Condition, into a ſtate of Liberty and Power. Thus vvas the Serpent turned into a Rod again. And this vvas the *firſt Sign*. The Second vvas that of *Moſes*'s Hand becoming leprous; and all on a ſudden reſtored again. Verſe. 6, 7. This vvas every vvay miraculous. For the Diſeaſe of the *Leproſy* is not cured ſo ſuddenly, vvithout a Miracle. Thus *Moſes*, *c* vvho like a leprous perſon, vvas a long time excluded from

b Lyranus *in locum*. *Quamvis pleriq;* Hebræorum, *Serpentem, de* Pharaone & Ægyptijs' *interpretantur*.

c Rivet *in locum*.

from the Society of the Lord's People, being baniſhed into a Wilderneſs, continued like a man half dead and buried in a deſert Land, all on a ſudden is revived and turned into another man, being ſent an Ambaſſador from the God of Heaven unto his People in *Egypt*. 2. Wee have here expreſſed, that which vvas the proper Deſign and Intendment of theſe Miracles; *viz.* that ſo the People, in whoſe ſight they ſhould afterwards be done, might be induced to believe the Word of God ſpoken by *Moſes*. V. 5. For which cauſe there muſt be one ſtrange Sign after another. The Verſe before us to conſider of, ſpeaks of two: and the next Verſe mentions a third. And although the Lord does hear expreſs himſelf *conditionally*, ſaying [*If*] they will not hearken to the voice of the firſt Sign, then they will believe the voice of the latter Sign, *&c.* The meaning is not, as though the Omniſcient God did not know whether one Sign would not effect that which was the proper end thereof, or no: But

the Lord is pleaſed to ſpeak after the manner of Men; who if one Attempt fail, they'l try another, and then another, and a third after that, untill at laſt they have what they ayme at. So (ſaith God to *Moſes*) I'le give thee power to work Miracle upon Miracle, untill at laſt the end of all be accompliſhed. The words imply, that it was a Duty to hearken to God's Voice in *One* Sign, much more in *diverſe*. And that the children of *Iſrael* ſhould hear the Lord's Voice therein; and that the *Egyptians* not hearkening thereunto, would be left the more inexcuſable.

The Doctrine which the words afford unto us, is,

That men ought to Hear the Voice of God in Signal Providences, eſpecially when repeated and Iterated.

There are three things which may be enquired into, for the clearing of this Doctrine. 1. What ſignal Providences are

are they the Voice whereof ought to be hearkned unto? 2. When men may be ſaid to Hear the Lord's Voice therein? 3. The Reaſons why they ſhould do thus.

Q 1. *What Signal Providences are they, the Voice whereof ſhould be Hearkned unto?* What Works of God are we to look upon as Signal? *Anſ.* In general, [d] the more *Eminent Works* of God are called *Signs* in the Scripture. Such Providences as doe *Signare*, h. e. declare & ſignify ſomething extraordinary, either as *Preſent*, or *Future*. Such Divine Works, as are in a ſpecial manner *Enſigns* of the Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Goodneſs, Glory of the Creator. Or that do ſignify the Accompliſhment of ſome eminent Work of God to be near at hand.

[d] *Res Inſolitæ, aut inter alias, quacunque ratione, Eminentes, dicuntur Signa; aut quia præſens quid ſignant, & tanquam erecta ſunt Vexilla Potentiæ, Sapientiæ, & Bonitatis Divinæ: aut etiam quia futura Dei Opera, & rerum Eventus præſignant.* Voetius *in Diſp. ſelect. Vol* 2. *Ubi de Signis. P.* 909.

More particularly.

1. There are Miraculous Signs. The words before us have special reference unto such *Signs*. A *Miracle* is an Extraordinary Providence. *e* It is a Work of God above the constituted Order of Nature. And therefore the Great God, and He onely, is the Author of a true Miracle. He alone doth Wonders. *Psal.* 136. 4. Such Works of God are called *Signs* in the Scripture. Thus some *f* judicious Expositors interpret those Words, *Psal.* 74. 9. *We see not our Signs*, as notifying the *Extraordinary*, as well as the *Ordinary* stated Signs of God's Presence. As if the Lord's People should there speak after the same manner as *Gideon* once did (*Judg.* 6. 13.) Where are all the Miracles, which our Fathers told us of? We see not our Signs, we see not those Miracles, which in the dayes of our Fathers were seen. The Lord doth not appear in that miraculous way for our Deliverance, as He did for them.

e Ames. *Theol. L.* 1. *Cap.* 9. *Thes.* 11, 12.

(*f*) *Sic* Vatablus, Aynsworth, & *alij.*

them. However, it is certain, that in many other Scriptures *Miracles* are called *Signs*. *Mar.* 16. 17. *Act.* 4. 30. For they are certain *Signs* of God's powerful presence with them, by whose hands they are wrought. & that therefore they are sent of God. The Miracles done by *Moses*, were Signs that God sent him, and was with him. When *John Baptist* sent his Disciples (not that he doubted thereof, onely that their Faith might be confirmed) to Christ, to enquire whether he was indeed the true *Messiah*, or no; the Lord Christ to convince them of it, told them what Miracles were wrought by Him. Those Miracles were *Signs*, *Arguments*, *Demonstrations* from Heaven, that Christ was as He professed himself to be, the Son of God, and Saviour of the World. And the Miracles which the Lord wrought by the Apostles, were *Signs* of the powerful Presence of God with them, and that the Doctrine which they taught, was from Heaven.

2. There are Portentous Signs. Such as

as we call Prodigies, which are Intimations and Signs either of the Mercy, or of the Wrath of Heaven toward the children of Men. The Plagues of *Egypt* were of a prodigious nature. When Water was turned into Blood, it was a prodigious *Sign* that the *Egyptians*, for their bloody Cruelty in murdering the Male *Iſraelitiſh* Infants, ſhould themſelves dye and periſh in the Waters. There were prodigious Thunders, and ſtorms of Fire and Haile, and prodigious Darkneſs throughout the Land; and a ſudden prodigious multiplication of noxious Creatures, deſtroying the Fruits of the Earth: All which *ſtrange Providences* were *Signs* portending the deſtruction of *Egypt*, and the ſalvation of *Iſrael*. There are indeed ſome prodigious *Signs*, which are alſo Miracles; many of thoſe in *Egypt*, were ſo There are other portentous Signs, which are not Miracles properly; but ſtrange Workes of Providence. Such as Blazing ſtars, and ſtrange Apparitions on the Earth, or in the heavens. There were *Fearful Sights*

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and great Signs from heaven, portending the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and Ruine to the *Jewiſh* Nation, as I have formerly had occaſion to ſhew from *Luk.* 21. 11. Signs of this nature, are ſometimes called *Tokens* in the Scripture, becauſe they uſe to *betoken* ſome eminent Work of God, and great Changes as near at hand. *Pſal.* 135. 9. Sometimes they are called *Wonders*, for that they uſe to cauſe great VVonderment and Admiration to be amongſt Mortals on the Earth. *&c.* Act. 2. 19, 20. *I will ſhew Wonders in heaven above, and Signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapour of ſmoak. The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come.* Prodigies *g* are oftentimes Signs portending ſome great and notable Day of the Lord to be at hand.

g Legantur Peucerus *de Divinatione*, & Lycoſthenes *de Prodigijs.*

3. There are ſignal Mercyes of God. Eminent Mercyes and Deliverances are ſignal Providences. Providencces that are

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by way of eminency called *marveilous loving kindneſs*. Pſal. 17. 7. Sometimes God is extraordinarily gracious to the children of men; and He is then ſaid to *do great things for them*. He beſtoweth ſuch Mercyes on them, as that themſelves who are the ſubjects thereof, cannot but vvonder at. He maketh them to marvel at his Goodneſs. *Zech.* 8. 6. *If it be marveilous in your eyes*. Yea, and others that ſee or hear thereof, to vvonder alſo. When the great ones of the Earth beheld vvhat God had done for his Servants of old, *they ſaw it and marvelled*. Pſal. 48. 5. Such Mercyes are *ſignal*. For they argue the great and admirable Goodneſs of God; and are ſometimes *Signs* of Divine Favour towards them that are the ſubjects of them, Hence *David* ſpeaks as *Pſal.* 86. 17. *Shew me a Token* (or a *Sign*: the *Hebrew* word there is the ſame with that in my Text) *[b] for good, that they that hate me may ſee*. He prayeth that the Lord would ſave him out of his

[b] Ravanelli *Biblioth. ſacr. in verbo* Signum.

preſent

Afflictions in ſuch an eminent vvay, as that his Enemyes might by ſuch a bright *Sign* of God's Favour to *David*, be convinced thereof, and be aſhamed of their Enmity againſt him, whom the God of Heaven did manifeſt peculiar Love unto. The Lord's own People are many times the ſubjects of ſignal Mercyes and Salvations. When they are brought into ſuch ſtraits and Difficulties, as that they cannot help themſelves, and there is none elſe to deliver them, now God ſteps in, and by his Wonder-working Providence ſaveth them. When the children of *Iſrael* were made Slaves in the Land of *Egypt*, there was little hope that they ſhould ever be delivered: but God by vvonderfull Providences brought it to paſs. And their deliverance out of *Babylon*, was a greater Work than that. *Jer.* 16.14, 15. For the Emperour of *Babylon* was a more potent Oppreſſor than *Pharaoh*. The Overthrow of the *Babylonian* Empire was more unlikely than the ruine of the Kingdom of *Egypt*; yet God by ſignal Providences

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brought it about, in Mercy to his People. Such Providences are *Signs* of God's ſpecial Care of his Church in the World.

4. There are ſignal Judgements: *Wonderfull Plagues*, as the Scripture-expreſſion is. *Deut.* 28. 58. Such Judgements as one may plainly ſee the Finger of God in them. The great Perſecutors and Oppreſſors of his People, are oftentimes ſmitten in ſuch a way, as that it is manifeſt that God hath done it. They are ſo high, as that *men* cannot come at them, but therefore the *Lord* removeth them by inviſible ſtrokes of his Hand, or of ſome Angel, whom He ſends from Heaven for that purpoſe; as it was with *Herod*, and with *Senacherib*'s Hoſt. Sometimes men are viſited with rare and Unuſual Judgements. There are *Prodigies of Judgement* falling down from Heaven upon the ſinfull children of men. Theſe are expreſſed in the Scripture, by that of an *Overflowing Scourge.* Iſai. 28. 18. A Judgement that doth not keep within ordinary Banks and bounds, is an Overflowing Scourge. As when

when ſudden deſtruction cometh and that upon many at once. When *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt, were all drowned in the *Red Sea*, it was a ſignal Judgement. The Lord ſhewed the Greatneſs of his Excellency, in overthrowing them that roſe up againſt Him. It was ſuch a Judgment as did aſtoniſh the World. The Dukes of *Edom* were amazed at it, Trembling took hold on the mighty Men of *Moab*, and all the Inhabitants of *Canaan* did e'en melt away at the Report of what was done. When the Flood came upon the Old VVorld, and thouſands of Millions of ſinful Creatures periſhed together, it vvas a ſignal Judgement. And when Fire (which uſeth to fly upward) contrary to its nature, fell down in ſtreams and ſhowers upon the *Sodomites*, to puniſh them for their Unnatural Abominations, when (as one of the Ancients ſpeaks) *Hell was rained down out of Heaven* upon thoſe worſe than helliſh Sinners, it vvas a ſignal Judgement. And indeed, all publick and general Calamities, may be called *ſignal*; becauſe they

they are *Signs* of the mighty Power, and of the great Wrath of the Holy God.

We come now to the second Enquiry, viz. *When men may be said to Hear the Voice of God in signal Providences?* *Answ.* 1. When they are thereby brought to believe his Word. The Lord's usual method is, first to speak to men by his Word, and if that taketh place, well and good: but if his Word be not regarded, then He speaks by *signal Providences*, one after another. The special Design of such solemn works of God, is to confirm his Word. When the Lord wrought such Signs in the Land of *Egypt*, it was (as hath been intimated) that People, both *Israelites* and *Egyptians*, might be induced to believe the word: which *Moses* spake in the Name of the Lord. The Scripture speaketh of the *Sign* of the prophet *Jonah*, because *i Jonah*'s miraculous Deliverance out of the Whale's belly, was to be a *Sign* to the *Ninevites*, that God had sent him. As in the Antitype, when Christ was raised out of the Grave, that was a Sign that He was no Impostor, as the wicked *Jews* blasphemously called Him; but the true Messiah sent of God. The Gift of working Miracles in the Primitive Times, was that so men might believe the Gospel. Signal Mercyes are bestowed upon men, that so they might believe the Truth of his Promises; and signal Judgements, that so they might believe his Threatenings. Yea, and when there is a *portentous Sign* appearing in the heavens, it is, that so men might believe the Word of God. Therefore when they do thus, they may be said to Hear the Voice of God in such signal Providences.

i Ravanellus *ubi supra.*

2. When men are by such signal Providences awakened to Fear that God, who speaketh to them therein, and

and thereby, they may be said to hear his Voice therein. Signal Mercyes call upon men to fear the Lord & his Goodneſs: Signal Judgemens call upon them to fear the Lord and his Greatneſs. Yea, ſuppoſing thoſe Judgements to be upon others onely, not for the preſent amongſt our ſelves, we ſhould be awakened greatly, to fear that God, whoſe Name is dreadful in all the Earth. When the Lord cut off the Nations round about, and made their Towers deſolate, He ſaid of Jeruſalem, *Surely they will Fear me.* Zeph. 3 7. They that pour out the Vials full of Plagues upon the *Antichriſtian* world, ſay, *Great and marveilous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, Who would not Fear thee?* &c. *Rev.* 15. 3, 4. God brings marveilous Judgements on his Enemyes; and beſtows marveilous Salvations on his People; all that hear thereof, ſhould learn to Fear Him. And the like is to be affirmed with reſpect to portentous Signs in the Heaven. For ſuch a Sign doth, as tis ſaid in the *Revelation* concerning the Angel which flew through the midſt of heaven, Ch. 14. V. 7. *He ſaid with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of his Judgement is come.* So doth ſuch a Sign in heaven (eſpecially if it be not a firſt; but a *Latter Sign*) cry with a loud voice, that all the World may hear, *Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of his Judgement is near at hand.* And therefore they that are thereby awakened to fear Him, may truly be ſaid *to Hear his Voice* in ſuch ſignal Diſpenſations of his Providence towards men here below. As that great Emperour *k*, who when there was a Blazing ſtar appearing, and ſome told him he ſhould not be afraid, becauſe the Scripture ſaith, *Be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven*; replyed, but *It becomes us to fear that God, who hath*

k Ludovicus I. Caroli Magni filius.

made this Sign in the heavens, and to admire his Goodneſs, in that he giveth us warning before He ſmiteth us.

3. When men practiſe according to what the Lord calls for, they may be ſaid to Hear his Voice, in his Signal and Solemn Diſpenſations. To *Hear*, in Scripture-language, is to *Obey*. Iſa. 55. 3. *Hear (i. e.* obey) *and your Souls ſhall live.* And when God doth ſo often promiſe Mercy unto thoſe that hearken to his Commandments; ſuch as yield Obedience thereunto, are intended. The children of *Iſrael* did *hear* the voice of thoſe Signs the Text ſpeaks of, when they *obeyed* the Lord's Call, in departing out of *Egypt*, as Hee commanded them. God requires men to forſake the ways of Sin; and to walk in contrary ways of Holineſs, and new Obedience before Him. Now if they ſhall by any ſignal Providences be prevailed upon ſo to do, then do they hear the Lord's voice therein.

Qu. 3 *But why ſhould men thus Hear the Voice of Signal Providences?* *Anſ.* I ſhall mention

mention only one *Reaſon*, and that ſhall be from the Conſideration of *the Authority and Greatneſs of Him that ſpeaketh in, and by ſuch Providences.* It is the *LORD*, the *MIGHTY GOD*, that is then calling upon the *Spectators*, or Subjects of ſuch Works of his. As for his Power of *Might*, it is Infinite. He is able as eaſily to deſtroy men, as to ſpeak to them. He that by a word's ſpeaking, made the World, is able by the breath of his Mouth to annihilate any Creature. Therefore they are highly concerned to Hear *when* and *what* He ſpeaketh to them. And as for his Power of *Authority*, it is Univerſal, and Abſolute. Divine Teſtimony ought to be received on that ſole account of the Authority of the Speaker. Hence often in the Scripture, it is ſaid, *Hear the Word of the LORD*, and *Thus ſaith the LORD:* intimating, that becauſe of the Authority of the Speaker, men have infinite Reaſon to Hear and Fear, and to Believe and Obey.

Uſe. 1. By way of Inſtruction. 1. *Hence*

great is their Sin, who deſpiſe, or diſregard the Signal Workes of God. When the Lord ſpeaketh to men by ſignal Eminent Mercyes, but they will not hearken to his Voice therein, their Evil is great. When they are not thereby led unto Repentance, and to love and ſerve the God of their Mercyes, and Deliverances. Such have no reaſon to expect other, but that God will change the tenor of his Diſpenſations towards them; yea, that He will do them hurt, after he hath done them good. *Joſh.* 24. 20. and that they ſhall become as eminent Examples for Judgement, as ever they were for Mercy. *You onely have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.* Amos, 3. 2. Or when God ſpeaks to a People by ſignal Judgements, one after another: by ſtrange Puniſhments; by Unuſual Rebukes of his Providence: For them not to hear, nor regard the Voice of the Lord therein, is great Iniquity. It argueth deſperate hardneſs of heart. Were not mens hearts exceeding hard; ſhould God

God but ſpeak to them by his *Word*, they would immediately fall down before it, as tender-hearted *Joſiah* did: But then, if he ſpeaks by ſignal and diſmal *Afflictions*, and that in an iterated way, *a Firſt, and a Latter Sign* of his Diſpleaſure; in caſe men will not *now* hear and obey, their hearts are like *Leviathan's*, *as hard as a ſtone, and firmer than a piece of the nether millſtone*, Nay, it is many times a black Sign of that Hardneſs of heart, which is a fearful Conſequent of eternal Reprobation. For was it not thus with the Reprobate heart of *Pharaoh*? One awful Sign of God's Diſpleaſure came upon him, and he regarded it not; and then another, *neither did he ſet his heart unto this alſo.*

And when God ſpeaketh to men by portentous Signs in the heaven; by a *firſt and a Latter Sign*, then for them to diſregard it, or to make light of it, is a great Sin. Mind, I pray you, what the Scripture ſaith, *Job.* 36. 24, 25. *Remember that thou magnifie his Work, which men behold. Every man may ſee it, men may be-*

hold it afar off. So it is when there is a Sign blazing amongſt the Stars of heaven, every man ſeeth it, they behold it afar off; now they ought not to deſpiſe; but to magnifie ſuch Works of God. And as for thoſe that do profanely contemn ſuch ſignal Works of the moſt High, there is an awful Scripture, the Conſideration whereof may ſtrike Cold to their hearts; I mean that in the 28*th* Pſalm, the 5*th* V. where it is ſaid; *Becauſe they regard not the Workes of the Lord, nor the Operation of his hands, He ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up.*

Inſtr. 2. *Hence then, the Works of God have a Voice in them, as well as his Word.* *Auſtin* calls the Sacraments, *Verba viſibilia:* Even ſo the Works of God are (as we may ſo ſpeak) *a viſible Word.* The Works of Creation have a Voice in them. The heavens declare the glory of God, day unto day uttereth ſpeech, there is no language *where their Voice is not heard.* Pſal. 19. 1, 2, 3. Stars, and Trees, and every Creature in the

the higher and in the lower world, preach and proclaim that there is a God, and that He is an infinitely glorious Being. And the Works of Providence have a Voice in them: Yea, common Providences have ſo; much more, ſpecial and ſignal Diſpenſations of Providence. Mercyes have a Voice in them; and therefore are ſaid to be *Witneſſes*. God hath not left himſelf without Witneſs, inaſmuch as He giveth Rain from heaven and fruitfull Seaſons. Judgements have a Voice in them. *Mic.* 6. 9. *Hear ye the Rod.* Brutiſh men may *feel* the Rod; but wiſe men *hear* the Rod, and underſtand the Lord's meaning therein. Yea, Judgements from heaven, have a loud, thundring, roaring Voice. *The Lord ſhall roar out of Sion, and utter his Voice from Jeruſalem.* The terrible Judgements, which He doth execute upon the World, are the Lord's Roarings out of Sion. There was *the Voice of Speech*; yea, *the Voice of the Almighty*, in thoſe Judgements, vvhich came upon Jeruſalem. *Ezek.* 1. 24.

Portentous Signs in heaven have a ſpeaking Voice in them. Sometimes they ſpeak the Mercy of heaven, and good will towards the children of men. As that extraordinary Light which ſhined about the Shepherds at the Birth of Chriſt, was a Token of Divine Favour. A very judicious and learned *l* Interpreter, thinks that the *Star* which appeared to the Wiſe men, was the ſame with that miraculous Light that ſhone about the Shepherds. It was no ordinary *Star*, nor yet [m] a *Comet* properly: for it guided to a particular Town & Houſe; and was therefore ſuch another miraculous work of God, as the Pillar of Fire, which directed the children of *Iſrael* in their way towards *Canaan*, being a *Sign* of the gracious Preſence, and Favour of God. But moſt com-

l Conſtat certe, & Lumen illud, & hanc Stellam eodem tempore & eodem fine apparuiſſe: Quid ni unum idemque Lumen eſſet? Lightfoot. (m) *Cometam proprie non fuiſſe patet,* 1. *Ex differentia Situs: quia hæc Stella inferior fuit.* 2. *Motus.* 3 *Apparitionis.* 4. *Durationis.* Spanhemius: *ſic &* Hoſpinian *de Origine Feſt. Chriſtian. P.* 28.

monly

monly, portentous Signs in heaven are Significations of Divine Diſpleaſure. The Lord ſends them as *Heraulds* to proclaim Wrath and Wo to a ſinful and unbelieving World. They are like the firing a Beacon upon an high hill, which giveth notice far and near, that Troubles are at hand; and that now men are concerned to prepare themſelves for the Battel.

Uſe. 2. of *Exhortation to Hearken to the Voice of God in all his Solemn and Signal Diſpenſations.*

The Lord hath of late Time, been ſpeaking by *very Signal Providences*, in other parts of the World, which we that are afar off, ſhould learn Inſtruction by. We hear the ratling of the flames of Perſecution afar off, whereby the Houſes of God in other parts of the World, are burning and conſuming. There's a Voice in thoſe flames ſpeaking to us. Have *n* we not heard how it hath been with the

n See *the Relation of the preſent ſtate of the Churches in* Hungaria, *lately printed.*

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poor *Proteſtants* in *Hungaria*, of later years? Five and twenty hundred Churches there reduced to a ſmall number. And in the Kingdom of *France*, what bloody Cruelties are exerciſed towards the *Proteſtants* there. Forty of late ſtarved to death in one Priſon, beſides many other Miſeryes, doleful to relate. And what a *fearful Inundation* was that which hapned in the *Netherlands*, no longer ſince than this laſt Winter, when thouſands loſt their Lives; and the Lord knoweth how many ſcores of thouſands had all their Eſtates taken from them in one fatal night. Surely the floods of great waters have come nigh unto them. And ſomething of that nature, we hear hath ſince that, hapned in the Land of our Fathers Sepulchres. God hath been opening the windows from on high there, and hath poured down a Flood of Calamity upon the Land. Hiſtorians report, that there was a prodigious Rain, and ſudden Flood cauſed thereby in the Land of *Egypt*, a little before the *Perſians* ſwallowed

ſwallowed them up. An Overflowing of the River *Tygris* did forethreaten the deſolation of *Nineveh*; which may probably be hinted at in that Scripture. *Nah.* 1. 8. It may be what we now hear of, is a *Sign*, that God will ere long pour down the Cataracts of his Wrath upon a ſinful Nation, which hath of late been found guilty before the Lord, of *Signal* Apoſtaſy, Debauchery, and (above all) of nefandous Contempt of the Pure and Powerful Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, witneſs the black day *p* when above two thouſand Miniſters of God were Silenced at once, as to their publick Teſtimony. *Shall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this, ſaith the Lord.* And hath not the Lord been ſpeaking by very ſignal Providences, wherein we our ſelves have been, and are peculiarly concerned? Hath not the Sword been raging in the midſt of thee, O *New-England*? Hath not the Lord been marching through the Land in Indignation? Hath

p V. Mr. Baxter's *Church Hiſtory. p.* 21.

Hath not a mortal Contagion been amongſt us, and ſwept away five or ſix hundred before it, in this one Town? Hath not God rendred his Rebukes in flames of Fire upon thee *Boſton*; and that not only by a firſt, but a *Second Sign* of his Holy and Righteous Diſpleaſure? And have we not bin viſited by the Lord of Hoſts, with Signal and prodigious Tempeſts? Was it not ſo two years ago, in a Place *q* not far off, when one that ſtood in the way of that Whirlewind of the Lord, was daſhed to death in a moment? Had the ſtrength and fury of that Guſt fallen upon ſuch a Town as this, where there are a multitude of Houſes, many Lives had periſhed. And I am informed, that there was this Summer, in a neighbour Colony *r*, a Tempeſt no leſs prodigious; vvhich in the Woods, for eight miles together, carried

q Viz. *in* Cambridge. *July*, 8. 1680. *(r) In* New-Haven *Colony, near* Stratford. *A more full account of theſe things, the Reader may expect in the Collection of remarkable Providences, intended to be publiſhed.*

all

all clear before it. Certainly, theſe are Signal, and ſpeaking Providences.

And now behold! the Lord is ſpeaking to us, and to all the World, by a *Blazing Sign*, which His own Hand hath hung up in the Heavens. It is not for nothing, that there is this *Latter Sign* appearing ſo ſoon (within leſs than two Years) after a former. Divines lay it down as a Principle of Truth ſ, That *Things, which proceed from Natural cauſes, if Unuſual, are Signal.* So may it be affirmed as to the Sign now hanging over our heads. Oh! let us conſider the Lord's Voice therein. But, *What doth the Lord ſpeak unto us by this Latter Sign in Heaven?*

Anſ. 1. Surely the Lord ſaith by it, The World is full of Unbelief. When the *Jews* continued in their Unbelief, notwithſtanding *John Baptiſt*'s powerful Mi-

ſ *Quicquid in Cœlo, Terra, & in Mari fit non ſolito, neque uſitato more, Divinitus pro* Signo *ponitur certorum Eventuum. Non igitur contemnamus hos Dei Prænuncios.* Alſted. *Theol. Natural. part.* 2. *p.* 346.

niſtry,

niſtry, it was ſaid, *Except you ſee Signs and Wonders, you will not believe.* Joh. 4. 48. Truly, except men ſee Signs and Wonders in heaven, they will not believe. Nay, except they behold a latter as well as a former Sign, they will not believe. How juſtly may the Lord from Heaven upbraid the World for their Unbelief.

2. God ſeems to intimate that there are great Changes haſtning upon the World. When God creates a *New* thing in the Heavens, 'tis a Sign He hath ſome *Strange* work to do in the Earth. What thoſe Changes are, Time will diſcover. Onely (as I have elſewhere noted) the conſtant Experience of former Ages declares that ſuch Signs *t* have bin portentous of great Mutations in the World. And the Scripture foretelling the great Changes, and dreadful Revolutions of Providence, which ſhall come to paſs

t Cometas nova Imperia portendere, apud omnes fere gentes receptum eſt. Vulcanius *auruſpex, teſte* Servio, *ad Eclog.* 9. *dicebat, Cometa ſignificari Exitum* veteris, *& Ingreſſum* novi *ſeculi.* Grotius *in* Matth. 2. 2.

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in the laſt Ages of the World, ſaith, that as Forerunners and Intimations thereof, there ſhall be *Signs in* (or *amongſt*) *the Stars.* God will raiſe an horrible Tempeſt amongſt the Nations, which will make the waves thereof to roar. Portentous and Fearful Sights, are a Sign that the days are at hand, wherein there ſhall be Diſtreſs of Nations, mens hearts failing them for Fear, and for looking after thoſe Things which are coming on the *Earth.* Yea, and that the Powers of *Heaven* ſhall be ſhaken. *Luk.* 21. 25, 26.

3. The Voice of the Lord cryeth to us, ſaying, *Be you prepared for whatever Changes may come.* Labour to be ſuch as that nothing ſhall be able to do you any hurt. Be moved with Fear, and get into the Ark. Make ſure of an Intereſt in Chriſt; and then no waters can drown you. If Troubles come; let them find you in Chriſt; and let them find us ſerving God, and glorifying Him in the ſeveral places He hath

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ſet us in. Yea, let them find us watching, and praying *that we may be accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man.*

TIBI DOMINE.